

2021 Review

CoramBAAF is a cornerstone in family placement and a leading voice for the sector. We would like to thank all our members – the UK-wide network of agencies and individuals – for working with and supporting us to secure the best outcomes for children in and leaving care.

Groups, committees and forums

We continued to run our influential practice forums, special interest groups and advisory committees. We also launched a Foster Carer advisory committee bringing together a diverse group of foster carers from across the country. The expertise and lived experience they bring both informs and challenges our work.

Our journal

Our journal, *Adoption & Fostering*, continues to attract submissions from countries across the world and our readership is increasing year on year. A standout article in 2021 was “*They want to give our children to white people and Christian people*”: *Somali perspectives on the shortage of Somali substitute carers*”, by Camelia Chowdhury.

National adoption strategy

In the summer, the Department for Education published its National Adoption Strategy, setting out its plan to deliver a high-quality, child-centred service and appointed a national strategic lead, working closely with the Regional Adoption Agency leaders.

We will continue to support this change agenda and our members through our training, good practice guidance and our assessment forms.

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I cannot thank you enough for your prompt and thorough response. This is so very helpful and is going to make such a difference to this young person's care plan.”

Independent Reviewing Officer,
Local Authority

Advice and Information

Our Advice Line is a very popular membership benefit and we answered nearly 2,500 enquiries. Enquiries ranged from post-Brexit impacts on eligibility to adopt and foster, to record retention and access within RAAs, to leaving care entitlements.

What sets our service apart is the expert advice available from our in-house legal and health consultants, as well as our specialists in fostering, adoption and kinship care. Our Information Service supports the Advice Line with up-to-date research, resources, and statistics.

Care Review

We engaged with the Independent Review of Children's Social Care on your behalf, with Dr John Simmonds contributing to the Evidence Group and Josh MacAlister speaking at our Members' Day in September. Read more about our ideas for change [here](#).

Members' Day

More than 260 representatives from member agencies across the UK joined us for our annual event in September.

Josh MacAlister, Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, outlined the review's progress so far and the challenges ahead to develop recommendations for change followed by a lively Q&A. Josh's presentation and Q&A session can be viewed [here](#).

CoramBAAF consultants delivered a programme of insightful workshops. Given the demand for places we plan to incorporate some of these into our programme of learning events.

The final session of the day featured a challenging and thought-provoking panel discussion on race and ethnicity in the care system. The session was a catalyst for further conversation and action – watch this space! Watch the discussion again [here](#).

EDI work

We have recently published an anti-racist statement on our website as well as a diversity statement in relation to our journal *Adoption & Fostering*. We are developing a comprehensive programme of work to address issues of race and racism in the care system so watch this space or get in touch if you want to work with us!

New chair of CoramBAAF

In December, we said thank you to our outgoing chair, Paul Curran, after six years at the helm. Paul provided great leadership and support to CoramBAAF and he hands over to Andrew Carter, the City of London Corporation's Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

Free events

We have introduced two new free monthly events for members. Our Exploring Expertise sessions are opportunities to share areas of innovation or best practice. Sessions have included achieving effective and helpful direct contact after adoption and the impact of abuse and neglect on developing sensorimotor systems. You can watch all our exploring expertise sessions [here](#).

Our Wellbeing for Professionals sessions explore the intersection between personal and professional wellbeing, addressing the physical impacts of stress, the impact of the pandemic, and the art of reframing. You have told us that having this regular supportive space to reflect on wellbeing has been really helpful so we will continue to run this free to all members. Sign up for the sessions [here](#).

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Helped me to reflect upon some of the direct contact I have been helping to support (...) and reminded me, very poignantly, about how important this is and how it really, really matters.

Feedback on 'Two Good Mums' Exploring Expertise session

CoramBAAF Digest

Our UK-wide monthly bulletin, *CoramBAAF Digest*, reaches over 8,500 members working in family placement and child welfare, with updates on the latest developments in legislation, regulation and policy. Sign up to receive it [here](#).

Consultancy

We continued to provide specialised, reflective supervision as well as consultancy advice on areas as diverse as agency decision making processes and developing a new Life Story policy for cared for children and young people.

Publications

Members received copies of books for social workers, adopters and foster carers, with easy to read, practical advice. New guides explored [allegations in foster care](#), the new [Moving to Adoption](#) model, [food issues in looked after children](#) and [difficulties in learning caused by early trauma](#).

We revised several of our bestselling guides giving members access to the most up-to-date information and guidance. These included [Beyond Together or Apart](#) and [Undertaking a Fostering Assessment](#) and our popular guide for those thinking about adoption, [Adopting a Child](#).

We launched [a new series of pamphlets for foster carers](#), with reliable, concise advice on potential complex issues when caring for fostered children, including radicalisation, self-harm and online safety.

Electronic forms

We have published new forms on sibling assessment, risk assessment in foster care, assessing a carer's new partner, and early permanence placements. We also revised our health assessment form and improved its digital functionality. This is something we are working to roll out across all our forms.

Blogs

This year we launched a blog section on our website, offering shorter pieces on the work of CoramBAAF and our members. Recent articles include supporting adopted children at school, and anti-racist practice in the family justice system. We are always keen to hear from members so please [get in touch](#) with any blogs or ideas.

Training

Over 3000 of you attended our training events in 2021 – more than ever before. The most popular topics included: Making Fostering Assessments, Child Permanence Reports and Life Story training.

We also delivered our well received Learning from Case Reviews webinar to nearly 400 participants from a range of organisations. The [book](#) on the same topic – by Hedy Cleaver and Wendy Rose – looked at case reviews in adoption, fostering and kinship care, and identified areas of best practice and areas for development.

You can book training [here](#).

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I really enjoyed the training throughout. The trainer was excellent and really listened to people.

Feedback on Making Good Fostering Assessments training